



File: EBCFA - MASKS/FACE COVERINGS

According to public health experts and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH), face coverings/mask-wearing is an important component in the prevention and control of COVID-19 in concert with physical distancing and other measures and offers one of the best ways to mitigate their spread for the safety of our school community.

The Acton Boxborough Regional School Committee recognizes:

- The pandemic will continue to evolve, sometimes in unpredictable ways, and our schools must be able to respond rapidly to prioritize the health and safety of members of the school community.
- Vaccines and ensuring access to vaccines for members of our school community are the primary strategy to control the spread of COVID-19.
- Masks play an important role in mitigating the spread of the virus
- Requirements to use masks should be based on available local public health information and consider impacts on the learning environment in our schools
- Mask requirements should strike a balance between enhancing student learning experiences and maintaining a safe environment in our schools.
- The health and safety of our school community should consider the emotional well-being of our students and staff and the relationships among them.

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School District (ABRSD) may at times mandate the use of face coverings/masks that cover the nose and mouth (as defined in EBCFA-R) by all individuals (including visitors) in school buildings, on school grounds and on school transportation, even when physical distancing is observed. Such mandates will be developed and enacted by the District administration and may be amended periodically in response to public health conditions with regard to the spread of COVID-19.

Student masks or face coverings are to be provided by each student's family or caregiver. Staff members may use their own masks or face-shields, or they may use face coverings/masks provided by the District. The district will have a supply of disposable face coverings for individuals who arrive at a school building or board school transportation without one.

If and when face coverings/masks may be required for some or all members of the community, they may only be removed under specific circumstances such as while eating or drinking, during scheduled mask breaks, when staff members are alone in their classroom or office or as further described in file EBCFA-R. Students or staff who otherwise remove their face coverings/masks may be subject to remedial and/or disciplinary action.

Procedures including details regarding the provision of masks, student and staff violations and mask exemptions are detailed in EBCFA-R.

This policy will remain in effect according to state and local health department guidance.

LEGAL REF.: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, COVID-19 Order No. 31 - <https://www.mass.gov/doc/may-1-2020-masks-and-face-coverings/download>

REFS.: Center for Disease Control and Prevention - Considerations for Wearing Masks
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education - Reopening Guidelines
- <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/>

Commonwealth of Massachusetts - Mask Up MA! <https://www.mass.gov/news/mask-up-ma>

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Acton-Boxborough Regional School Distric